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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 25, 2002**

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# **SOFIANE LAIMECHE CONVICTED OF SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD AND FALSE STATEMENTS**

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced today that on Friday, February 22, SOFIANE LAIMECHE, 29, from Algeria, was found guilty of using a false Social Security Number and making false statements on government documents by a federal jury at Phoenix, Arizona.

The evidence at trial showed that LAIMECHE illegally entered the United States in 1997 after being smuggled into the Port of Philadelphia aboard an Algerian vessel. LAIMECHE traveled to Phoenix five days after arriving in the United States and purchased a false identity, including a Social Security number, that he used to secure employment using the alias "Marcello Scutari." During an interview with the FBI in September 2001, LAIMECHE admitted that he had not been truthful during previous interviews with FBI agents, and confessed to entering the United States illegally and using a false identity name and identity documents.

**SOFIANE LAIMECHE** had been charged with violating Title 18, of the United States Code, Section 1001, and Title 42, of the United States Code, Section 408(a)(7)(B). The case was tried before United States District Court Judge James A. Teilborg from February 20-22, 2002.

(MORE)

A conviction for false statements carries a maximum penalty of five years, a \$250,000.00 fine or both. A conviction for Social Security Fraud carries a maximum penalty of five years, a \$250,000.00 fine or both.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Office of the Inspector General/Social Security Administration..

Sentencing is set before Judge Teilborg on May 6, 2002, at 2:30 p.m.

The prosecution is being handled by John K. Webb, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, and Peter Sexton, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-01-1014-PHX-JAT  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2002-046

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